

OZONE...the good, the bad, and the solution

What is ozone?

Ozone is an odorless, colorless gas made up of oxygen atoms.

Where is ozone found?

Ozone is found both in the upper atmosphere and at ground level.

The ozone occurring in the upper atmosphere (10-30 miles above the earth's surface) is considered good ozone because it helps to block the Sun's ultraviolet rays.

Ozone occurring near the Earth's surface is considered bad because it is made of pollutants resulting from car emissions, aerosols, factories, refineries, chemical plants and boilers.

Are there health effects from the bad ozone?

Yes. This damaging ozone can cause several health problems.

- Irritation of the respiratory system resulting in coughing, sore throat, shortness of breath or chest discomfort.
- Reduction in lung function. Simply put this is your ability to take a deep breathe and how fast you can blow it out.
- Increased asthma attacks and respiratory illnesses including bronchitis and pneumonia.
- Inflammation resulting in damage to the lining of the lung.

Who is most at risk for these health problems?

- People with heart or lung disease
- People with asthma or other respiratory diseases
- Active children playing outside
- Adults participating in outdoor activities

What can be done to reduce ozone levels?

- Brown bag your lunch or walk to a nearby restaurant.
- When driving use the cruise when possible and do not exceed the speed limit. Avoid idling.
- Plan ahead and combine short driving errands.
- Refuel your car after 6 PM and do not top off the fuel tank.
- Keep your car, boat, or lawn equipment in good running shape.
- Carpool, ride the bus, walk or ride your bike whenever possible.
- Conserve electricity.
- Use electric or hand powered lawn equipment. If you must use gas-powered equipment do so after 6 PM.
- Start your charcoal grill with a chimney or electric starter instead of lighter fluid.
- Next time you're in the market for a new car, consider purchasing one with reduced

What if the bad ozone continues to increase?

If we do not **VOLUNTARILY** reduce the bad ozone, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) along with local governments could impose tougher emission regulations on businesses and citizens.

Other changes could include:

- Limiting new industry coming into our area resulting in the loss of jobs.
- Placing stronger governmental regulations on highway and road construction resulting in delayed improvements.
- Requiring all vehicles to undergo emission testing each year.
- Declaring ALERT days restricting personal vehicle travel when air quality is poor.

REMINDER: Ozone reduction is necessary for a healthy environment and healthy people.

For additional information, call 864-1086 or 864-1667.

www.springfieldmogov.org/health